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Claim 1 (thrice amended). A composite material, comprising:

a ceramic matrix consisting essentially of phases of silicon, carbon, and silicon carbide; and

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fiber bundles having two different fractions including a reinforcing fiber bundle fraction and a matrix fiber bundle fraction having lengths with different averages, each of said fiber bundles having a weight, said weights being proportional to said fiber bundle lengths, said weights being plotted on a total fiber bundle distribution, and said fractions of fiber bundles being separated by a minimum in said total fiber bundle distribution.

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Claim 2 (amended). The composite material according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said fiber bundles have at least one protective layer.

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Claim 3 (twice amended). The composite material according to claim 1, wherein said fiber bundles contain fibers selected from the group consisting of carbon fibers, graphite fibers, SiC-fibers, aluminum oxide fibers, $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{SiO}_2$ -fibers, $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{SiO}_2\text{B}_2\text{O}_3$ -fibers, carbonized cellulose fibers, carbonized wood fibers, and fibers resistant to elevated temperatures based on compounds containing Si, C, B, N, Al.

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Claim 4 (amended). The composite material according to claim 1, wherein said fiber bundles contain at least one of nano fibers, whiskers, and nanotubes.

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Claim 5 (amended). The composite material according to claim 1, wherein said ceramic matrix additionally contains phases of at least one of aluminum, zirconium, silicon nitride, boron nitride, boron carbide, SiBCN, Al_2O_3 , ZrO_2 , TiC, and iron silicides.

Claim 6 (amended). The composite material according to claim 5, wherein said ceramic matrix contains additions selected from the group consisting of iron, chromium, titanium, molybdenum, and nickel.

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[Add the Following Claims:]

--67. The composite material according to claim 1, wherein said phases of silicon in said ceramic matrix are elemental silicon.--

--68. The composite material according to claim 1, wherein said phases of carbon in said ceramic matrix are elemental carbon.--